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TITLE: Establishing an International Registry of Behavioral, Social, and Policy Intervention Studies to Prevent HIV/AIDS

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BACKGROUND: Planners, providers and users of services, as well as researchers in HIV prevention, need easy access to intervention studies. A centralized register, or database, of studies will facilitate monitoring what has been studied and identifying major research gaps. It also will provide researchers with an efficient way to obtain the relevant literature to conduct synthesis studies. Development of a centralized registry was stimulated by the formation this past year of an HIV/AIDS Cochrane Review Group within the Cochrane Collaboration, an international effort in conducting, maintaining, and disseminating systematic reviews of the effects of health care.

OBJECTIVE: To establish a centralized international registry of HIV/AIDS behavioral, social and policy prevention studies.

METHODS: (1) Two existing registries of HIV prevention studies were merged to obtain the relevant studies: the CDC Prevention Research Synthesis (PRS) project registry and the EPI-Centre³ registry. Each registry was the result of systematic searching by means of electronic databases; hand searching of key journals; scanning of reference lists; and contacting relevant agencies, organizations and academic centres. (2) Overlap/discrepancy between the two registries was assessed and reconciled. (3) A strategy for organizing, continuously updating and disseminating the joint registry was identified.

RESULTS: More than 250 studies currently comprise the HIV/AIDS prevention interventions international registry. Each study is provided with bibliographic information and also with classifications for: country where the study was carried out; population involved (age, gender, ethnicity, risk); setting of the intervention (e.g. health care setting); intervention approach (eg counseling and testing); research design (RCT, trial, other design); and types of outcomes measured (e.g. behavioral outcome). The registry will be available at the HIV Prevention Conference via web site.

CONCLUSION: The international registry of behavioral, social and policy intervention studies will provide a new and reliable source for planners, providers, consumers, and researchers to identify and examine HIV effectiveness research in an efficient way.

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